I Can Handle Things

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I Can Handle Things

by WordsAblaze

Summary

Hannibal stumbles backwards, blood flowing freely down his face as Will watches impassively.

“I could tear your throat out,” Will whispers, equally as impassively, his facade betrayed only by the anxious tap-tapping of his fingers.

“I could let you,” Hannibal replies, a little muffled by his attempts to stop the bleeding; if it hadn’t been for the investigation brewing above them and the subsequent necessity of remaining undetected, he wouldn’t have bothered. “I still might.”

Notes

some vaguely good vibes bc we're halfway through whumptober <3

day 15 prompts used: suppressed suffering

See the end of the work for more notes

Hannibal watches through the gaps in the patterned front of the alcove as Will converses with nothing but thin air. Except not quite thin air, because he knows that expression, he knows there's only one person that expression has ever been directed towards.

He watches as Will turns away from where Abigail must have been standing—he barely resists revealing himself on the spot just to confirm whether she simply walks away or if Will finally realises she can't be real—and his chest twists with a peculiar discomfort when Will sighs, his head drooping as he curls in on himself.

He marvels, briefly, how Will has managed to convince himself that abandoning his life in Wolf Trap is a notion worth entertaining. But he doesn't get long to marvel, because apparently Will cannot step foot on crime scenes without someone or the other inquiring about *him.*

Interestingly, Will's expression seems to animate as he and the inspector discuss him, unaware of their suspect listening in on their conversation. Hannibal thinks he can hear the bruising of Will's ribs as he speaks, his voice a little stiffer than usual, and he makes a note to investigate that as soon as possible.

He doesn't get a chance to until later, until they're below ground and he's hidden in the darkness as Will deftly loses his tail and stops in the centre of a little stone clearing, the hint of a smile on his face.

"I forgive you."

Hannibal holds his breath.

"You asked me, not long ago, if I would. And I will. I forgive you, Hannibal. I have forgiven you as you forgave me."

After a moment, just as Will's expression begins to sink, or perhaps as a result of that, Hannibal steps forward. "I had hoped you would."

Will's head snaps up and his gaze locks on to Hannibal's without missing a beat, as if he'd known all along exactly where he was, which, all things considered, he probably had. "I got your message," Will says quietly.

"And what did you make of it?" Hannibal asks, carefully.

His smile transforming from something hesitant to fully-fledged sincerity, Will steps forwards, shadows reflecting in his eyes. "It was beautiful."

Hannibal knows there and then that, no matter how carefully crafted his plans may be, no matter how much work will end up being unravelled, no matter how many consequences he'll have to endure, he will *not* lose Will Graham again.

"Beauty is all I ever wanted for us, Will."

Will takes another step forwards, and another, and another, until they're so close that Hannibal can see himself in Will's gaze, can see the relief written so plainly and uncharacteristically across his own features. Will takes yet another step forward and, before Hannibal's breath has time to catch, pain explodes in his nose.

With a groan, Hannibal stumbles backwards, blood flowing freely down his face as Will watches impassively. "I could tear your throat out," Will whispers, equally as impassively, his facade betrayed only by the anxious tap-tapping of his fingers.

"I could let you," Hannibal replies, a little muffled by his attempts to stop the bleeding; if it hadn't been for the investigation brewing above them and the subsequent necessity of remaining undetected, he wouldn't have bothered. "I still might."

"No." Will bridges the distance between them again, and it dawns on Hannibal that Will is simply attempting to even the playing field, his clever mongoose. "That would make for a rather ugly ending, don't you think?"

"What happened to your face?" Hannibal asks, cataloguing his facial injuries for the first time now that he has one of his own.

Will laughs softly. "Are you calling me ugly, Doctor Lecter?" The use of his title is not lost on Hannibal, and he offers an apologetic smile, or, more accurately, what he hopes is some semblance of one. But he need not have worried, because Will merely shrugs. "Your guard dog pushed me off a train."

From anyone else, that would have been enough to warrant a dinner party. But from Will, who reveres canines as though they carry the secrets of the universe in their paws, it's nothing less than a glowing review. Hannibal smiles, admittedly glad that the wounds had been inflicted by someone who has more than earned his approval over the years, and takes a step forward, just enough to catch Will slightly off-guard. "And do you now wish to push me off something in return, Will?"

Frowning, and more frantically tap-tapping his fingers against his legs but clearly unaware of himself doing so, Will tears his gaze away. "Neither of us have earned the right to so incorrectly embody Sisyphus."

Something inside Hannibal—the same something that had been so unsettled by Will's silent distress earlier—begins to burn with a strange, hesitant sort of flame. He nods, and reaches up to brush the pad of his thumb over the wound just under Will's eye. "Perhaps Prometheus is more to your liking?"

"Perhaps," Will replies, but his voice is barely a whisper, his shoulders tense as he tracks the movement of Hannibal's hand. He stops breathing altogether when Hannibal's thumb ghosts his lower lip, a feather touch of reassurance.

Hannibal, furious that such a small action could undo Will's rage, that he has clearly been so devoid of comfort that no more than the slightest dose of it could have such a strong effect, takes a deep breath and leans forward just enough to press their foreheads together. The

contact lasts no more than a few seconds, but Will inhales sharply, his next exhale shuddering out of him as his shoulders fall and he slumps forward.

Having expected—hoped for—such a reaction, Hannibal wastes no time in pulling Will close, curling one hand around his back and another around his head, gently running his fingers through Will's rough curls. "You have almost burned yourself out in your quest to answer my call."

"The blame can hardly be mine for that," Will mumbles, his hands reaching up to curve around Hannibal's shoulders. "What choice did I have?"

"You had every choice, Will," Hannibal murmurs, but they both know he's lying. There has and will always be but one choice for either of them, the choice to follow one another down each twisting, darkening path, drawn together like magnets time and time again.

Will doesn't reply to that and, when Hannibal tightening his grip leads him to wince, he realises that may not just be because he disagrees. Reluctantly, fuelled by some ancient vestiges of the hippocratic oath, Hannibal pulls away with a concerned frown. "You are forcing yourself to endure pain."

"What choice did I have?" Will repeats, but, this time, Hannibal knows he means it. He doesn't know how exactly Will has made his way to him, but he can wager that, judging from how desperately he had needed to return a fraction of that pain to Hannibal in the form of a possibly fractured nose, the journey had not been an easy one, and, what's more, Will had made it much harder for himself than necessary.

"Will you allow me to make your next choice for you, then?" Hannibal asks, only a little mortified that he can't at all hide the urgency in his tone.

Clearly having picked up on just that, Will shakes his head incredulously. But he then sighs, and his expression softens. "And what is it you so desperately long to choose for me, Hannibal?"

"Allow me to show you," Hannibal requests, tilting his body to the half-hidden side exit, knowing—hoping, praying—that Will is still willing and capable of reading his intentions and understanding all that he's offering.

And Will, clever, curious, post-chrysalis Will, slowly but surely intertwines their fingers in response.

and then they run off to (the rest of) europe together...

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